

In what ways can agricultural systems reflect culture and social systems?

IB standard: 3.5.4: Discuss the links that exist between social systems and food production systems.

North Korean forced collectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced collectivization by government under communism. • North Korea is mostly mountainous with poor quality soils. • Initially in 1940s collectives were owned by the farmers. • In 1950s the state took control of ownership of land and machinery making the farmers employees of the state. • Shared / government ownership of machinery. • Previously no surplus allowed to be kept by farmers – government controlled it. Now changing and they may sell 30%. See http://finance.yahoo.com/news/north-korea-experimenting-change-083819505.html • Holdings of several farmers under one collective. • Farmers tend to put most effort into cultivating small pieces of land around their homes for own consumption. • Strong parallels to Korean politics and society.
Kibbutz farming in Israel – voluntary collectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary collectives. • Combination of Zionism and Socialism – ideals of communal living. • Kibbutz residents sometimes called upon in times of conflict. • Rarely economically successful. • Based on communal living – shared division of labour, largely along gender lines. • Jewish faith at heart of collectives – anthropocentric with people as environmental managers of the land. • Increasingly operating as organic farms within an ecocentric framework. • 267 kibbutzim in Israel. <p>C.f. moshav.</p>
Agro-industry in MEDCs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale farming often owned by big transnational corporations (Nestle, Monsanto). • Highly mechanized. • Extensive. • Large inputs. • Large outputs. • Big environmental consequences. • Uses a lot of water • Economies of scale. • Ethical issues. Video clip: Food Inc. <p>These farms reflect industrialization and the pressures of population growth and increased demand for food. They also reflect a technocentric / anthropocentric worldview. Technology seen as holding the power to provide food for human population, and technology able to solve environmental problems.</p>
Maasai and the social significance of cattle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditionally the Maasai do not grow crops or depend on the cash economy. • Ecocentric relationship with the land / animals. • Rely on their cattle for survival – blood, meat, skins, milk. • The more cattle (and other livestock) a tribe has, the more powerful they are and the more influence they will have. • Therefore, agricultural power = actual power. • Maasai look down on those who farm crops as they see this as damaging the already fragile soil. • Clear gender divisions based on agriculture – men are the protectors (of women, children, cattle), women are in charge of the home, cooking, collecting water, milking the cattle. • Shift to arable farming changing culture.